776 241 is represented as making her nocturnal visitation at the time the grain is threshed. An old woman, dressed in rags, wearing old unmatched sandals, and carrying broken gourds, runs about the countryside simulating madness. She follows the mythological itinerary from west to south and from east to north, and then returns and sits down near the granaries (1).

[171]

1. However, the very first agricultural techniques known as fyẽ ti (literally, cultivation of the wind) are recalled, particularly among the Bozo, by random sowings of a certain number of wild grasses, then cereals, in the fields where the harvest is offered to Faro. Similar rituals are celebrated in certain Bambara villages. The techniques taught by Mousso Koroni came after those "of the wind," and precede that of millet cultivation.

For information on some agricultural rituals of the Bozo, see G. Dieterlen, "L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo /Ritual Agriculture of the Bozo/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 20 (1950).

776 857 Mousso Koroni's agricultural work and her unhappy wanderings are also represented in a children's ritual, carried out at night during the cultivation period. One of the players, the yukuri or dantoni (literally, little hunchback), wears sandals for ears, a hump at the small of his back, a cloth tail tied low about his waist. He goes begging from /40/ door to door, followed by all the uncircumcised of his neighborhood. He pretends to cultivate and to thresh grain while his companions intone chants recalling Mousso Koroni's mythical actions. After his round is finished and the presents of millet are gathered, the player, pursued by all the others, runs off and disappears amid catcalls.

776 241 783 But while this parody of cultivation, with its rituals and chants, recalls the phases of Mousso Koroni's disorderly life, the agricultural techniques she initiated earlier are in themselves an important expression of the reparation made to the confusions she had caused. Every hoeing by the farmer is a wound inflicted on the impure earth,

776 hence on Mousso Koroni. The ritual cultivation of millet, a noble
241 activity to which every aristocratic Bambara must dedicate himself,
783 is an institution which Faro taught in his time and constitutes a purification and a reordering of the soil (1).

1. Dugukolo be be dyuruma, "the whole earth is impure." But as only virgin soil is considered impure, it is also said: dyurumu be be dugukolo ka forow sani nyala do, "the whole earth is impure except for the cultivated fields." The word dugukolo (literally, bone of the earth) designates both the earth as a whole and the earth as matter. The same notions [171] concerning the impurity of the earth hold for the Dogon. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 94.

Faro

Faro's Shapes

776 Faro was a "voice" before he materialized into a body. In his role as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, he is represented by a spiral, munu, in which he occupies the point of origin at all times. The spiral is situated in the center of the cardinal points (2). Its vibratory unrolling represents "the displacement of

2. This "central point," which is also the firmament, is described by the Bambara as sa tyema kolo, literally, the bone of the middle of the sky.

Faro for the realization of all things in the universe."

776 This image is materialized in a basketry headdress, yugu, with a
292 spiral of eight turns. The straw sprigs that form the spokes supporting the spiral symbolize the vibration; the intervals, yugunye or eye of the yugu, which separate them are rays of light, the spiral representing

776 He takes on many forms. He can be seen in the brush as a gazelle feeding on wild tomatoes and onions. As a ram with golden fleece and wearing ear ornaments, he travels underground along gold veins. As a young and seductive woman he goes to the villages to seduce the boys and take them away with him. He is the head of the fleeting torrent that runs after a rainfall; he is the seething and swelling of the currents. He can be recognized in the bluish haze that floats above the ponds. A stream that dries up is a sign of his anger.

Faro's Realm

776 821 At the beginning, the waters that originated in the "central springs of the sky" and streamed over the earth, were pure, clear, beneficial and "easy." But after Mousso Koroni's betrayal and that of the beings who listened to her, impurity was communicated to the earth /45/: the water that covered the earth clouded, changed color, and became "difficult." It either dried up or, on the contrary, flooded the land, drowning living beings.

Today only the streaming rain water has preserved its character, more especially the first rain that falls at the beginning of winter. [783] It is considered a purifying agent par excellence and is called dane sandyi, "water that sows," for it brings to the grains their soul, ni; the earth, sterile and "empty," becomes full and fertile, plants are reborn, animals and insects multiply (1).

[577]

1. A person who is generous and good is referred to as being like this first rain. It is also said of the spirit: "the spirit [is good like] the first rain" (miri dane sandyi).

The terrestrial waters, Faro's kingdom, are classified into seven distinct realms. They are in layers which correspond to the seven parts of the sky and earth.

The first, dyi woyo "seething water," is surface water: it seethes when Faro makes himself known, and overflows in floods, as the heads [783] of streams are swelled by the storm. It is also the lustral water used for purification and the water drawn for drinking.

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1. Bolo ti doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba daga ye dyɛ saba gundo ye, tyemasa bolokoni ye dyɛ dura ye.

yo, of which only the first is realized (2).

2. On the worlds thought out by yo,
see pp. 23-26.

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On another level, the signs of the thumb are related to powers and those of the index to royal domains (fig. 1, nos. 8-12):

1. Sign zero (fu) represents the beginning of creation, the origin of all things. A curved segment extended from left to right denotes the dynamic quality of the universe. It is intersected by a multiplication sign expressing the infinite development of beings and things. But the vertical stroke crossing it on the left indicates both the cessation and the suppression of the whole (no. 11).

2. Sign of lightning. It expresses royal power and justice and is traced under the thumb ring of the king. The latter, when giving an order, would swing his hand, which means he is swinging lightning before those he addresses (no. 12).

3. Sign of the royal domain. The opening asserts the possible extension of the kingdom; the transversal bar is a protection of this kingdom from all destruction (no. 8).

4. Sign of the extension of this domain at the tree cardinal sides: east, west, and south (no. 9).

5. Sign of union. The oval represents the whole group of functionaries called fodyɔ and barodɛ, officers and councilors who administer the kingdom under the king's authority (no. 10).

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[783]

As the feet are constantly in touch with the soil, they take on its impurity. An individual who has gone through severe purifications will need to avoid putting his feet on the ground during a period of time occasionally quite prolonged, for "to place one's toes on the ground is to put one's soul in contact with the impure earth" (1). It

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1. The invention of the shoe is mythically linked to the notion of the earth's impurity; the wearer must therefore avoid this contact.

[p. 22, category 116 — Analyst.]

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three threads on their shuttles.

826 On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world," is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in

1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: kungu, "little beard of millet," involucre; fara dye, "white bark," glume and glumales; fara fi, "black bark," bran and protein aceous bark; fara mugu, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); mugu dunta, "flour for eating," starch; kolo dye, "white bone," embryo; kise de, "son of grain," the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the native divisions. In certain villages, grains [782] undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash.

their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones (kolo kalanjiri, or ka kolo). Man carries within him his subsistance, and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof [783]

2. See p. 53, n. 2.

of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles, and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
848 his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
564 known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
783 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the world impure children who will never have a right to their father's barama (1).

1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, tne or tana, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the

2. See p. 52.

beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

784 during the famine, and that in the future the crocodile would be taboo
773 to the Traoré as a sign of gratitude for his gift and as an apology for the murder committed.

The taboo of the Diara family is the lion, whose name they bear. In the olden days two old friends were always in the habit of hunting together with arrows and spears. In the course of a long famine, their weapons broke and they were not able to find others. In order to feed their families, they attacked wild animals with bare hands; the one would stun his victims with his fists, and the other would skin them.

Gradually the life they were leading changed their behavior. They no longer washed, their hair and beards grew, and thick hair covered their body. Their nails became so long and so hard that they used them to slice meat and to dig the earth. They even forgot the language they had spoken and only communicated by grunts.

They fought with the spirits to gain a foothold in those places ordinarily reserved for the latter. They no longer returned to their village. Their parents searched for them, but as soon as they saw people, they ran away. They ended by walking on all fours and appeared like the animals they pursued.

One day as they lay sleeping next to each other, they mated and the stronger one impregnated the weaker to give birth, a little later, to two lion cubs. The men who saw them in the bush with their offspring decided that hereafter they could not kill a lion for it had their blood in its veins. Even today, when a Diara meets a lion, the animal lies down, "so ashamed to be descended from the mating of two men who had become beasts."

784 These two examples, selected from many others, illustrate the relations between man and animal. These appear even more clearly in the mechanism set off by the breaking of the adopted taboo.

Indeed, the first consequence of any infraction is the offender's loss of the seeds in his collarbone, a symbol of his basic sustenance. He becomes "an empty granary" and, deprived of his strength, is unable to contend against that of the wounded animal /82/ attacking him. The pain he feels at that moment is proof of the state of his physical and psychic inferiority. Any breaking of a taboo affects first the eyes, then the other openings of the body.

784 If the animal is wounded, it delegates its tere to warn the guilty
783 man of the sin committed, but makes no attempt on his life since it is his ally. On the other hand, its death liberates its nyama which

784 acts more energetically. But it is even more serious to eat one's taboo
783 than to ill it, for then the person cannot get rid of his victim's nyama and must suffer all the consequences.

The guilty person goes to the shore of the Niger and in a loud voice, discloses the facts to Faro while making him an offering (millet mash, copper, etc.), then he drinks a little water and goes home. If he lives too far from the river, he goes to a remote place and acts in the same way by spilling a little of his own blood as a sign of expiation. These acts have the effect of rectifying everything with Faro whom he has offended by breaking the established order. Next, he undergoes the purification rites. Their agent is his ally senānku and the rites are carried out at an intersection, dangu (1). The effect of such rites is

[602] 1. See p. 183. In certain cases the purification may be carried out by a kinsman of an ascending generation and may include ablutions with water consecrated by a prayer addressed to Faro.

to rid him of his victim's nyama, and then to reinstate the symbol of the eight life-giving cereal seeds in his collarbone: thus he recovers his lost strength. After his recovery, the old men of his family summon him and give him some stern advice for another breaking of the taboo cannot be atoned by any purification: the animal's nyama will no no longer leave the repeating offender who may die of it.

784 Voluntary infractions, which are very rare, of course bring about far more serious consequences for the person in question since his responsibility is involved. This is not so in the opposite case. If a man has eaten his taboo without knowing it during a meal taken at the home of another, the animal's nyama may attack those responsible: either the host or his wife becomes ill. The guilty woman must then
[201] ask the man's forgiveness. On her knee and with her hands at the back, she discloses the facts to the person she has injured who may ask for time to think and make her wait in order to punish her. Otherwise he demands three kola nuts with which he carried out the dyanzani or "replacement." He throws them in the bush or gives them to the first poor person he meets. A few days later the responsible person is liberated.

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Tangara chief gave them land to build their houses and set up their fields. The two groups live in perfect understanding.

their descendants. Such an alliance is equivalent to kinship. It involves the absolute obligation never to covet the life or possessions of the senãnku. The two parties are obligated to mutual assistance in many cases: food, housing, material aid; help in case of war or lawsuit; obligatory presence at religious ceremonies; purifications in case a taboo is broken.

These rules imply that the alliance affects the individual not only in his social roles, but also in his spiritual principles. The senãnku is a kind of twin to each individual belonging to the other family. He has within himself a part of his partner and vice versa.

602 Because of this fact, the reactions set off by insult or by joking are singular: the senãnku will accept from the mouth of the other, without becoming angry, mockery which he would not normally tolerate. He cannot be affected by them since the words are addressed to that part of his being which comes from the person insulting him. Moreover, the joke or the insult, without touching his spiritual integrity, has the effect of confirming him in his position relative to the person addressing him and of affirming the state of both parties, thereby increasing their vitality. It determines movements of forces from which the two speakers reciprocally benefit, as from a kind word.

This proceeding is used on numerous occasions, particularly at the time a person achieves a new social status or a new grade. The senãnku jokes with a newborn child as soon as his name is given and, later, on the day he wears his first piece of clothing. The circumcised boys become allies and joke between themselves the day of the daworo which consecrates the age grade (1). On the evening of

1. See p. 241.

marriage, the young woman is the object of ritual sarcasm which marks her final introduction into the husband's family group.

602 The senãnku is the only one who, in certain cases, is able to
•783 carry out the purification rites made necessary by a broken taboo (tne). It is true that he carries in his collarbone—but only /85/ where his partner is concerned—twice the number of symbolic seeds,

602 that is, sixteen. This fact qualifies him, by his gesture of purification
783 and through his essential role as provider of sustenance, to restore the seeds that had left the guilty man's collarbone. If the offense is slight, the offender gives him millet, money, or an object. The wounded animal's nyama settles on the object, and the senãnku who receives it rids him of it without being affected himself. If the offense is more serious, the two allies go off together to a road intersection, dangu; then the senãnku takes a straw torch in the shape of a cross and circles the guilty man's head with it from left to right. The being who has been offended by the broken taboo can refuse nothing when confronted with this procedure. He removes the nyama he had inflicted and the man, powerfully aided by the forces of the purifying agent, recovers those he had lost, as symbolized by the seeds in his collarbone.

This cathartic role of reinstating subsistence forces into the human body is illustrated in daily life by the food prestations to which the partners are held. This is like the secular and materialistic representation of an invisible operation of purification.

The Person: Exceptional Cases

000 Certain physical peculiarities constitute the manifest evidence of a modification of the elements making up the person. It is appropriate here to examine the cases of individuals who are thus affected.

Twins

845 Twins, flani (literally, two little ones), are two new beings given to men by Faro and considered as his offspring alone. Because of this fact, twins inherit neither the ni nor the dya of a dead person, but they inherit new principles which come to them from the spirit. Moreover, their dya never leaves the water for the shadow, but remains in the hands of the spirit throughout their entire life. Because of this they are protected from all danger and from all impurity.

Such a birth is considered a blessing and is granted only to certain privileged people called kunandi. It is announced by holding up the [201] right and left forefingers without uttering a word, for its announcement would be so powerful that it would harm the newborn. Their mother wraps a white cotton band called dyala about her forehead to indicate the presence of the children's dya /86/ in Faro's hands.

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 773 Men's first garment was the skirt of nyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club, gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil

[783] 1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he may be rid of his infirmity. The clothing of a woman in labor, in [844] order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 773 386 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncircumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

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hypocrisy, humiliation, and cheating are not done at the door of the forge."

5. Envy, jealousy, and ill humor are generally bad for the blacksmith who loses his "turn of the hand." He must "have a pure heart" (1).

1. Numu te keleya note i bolo na tye: "The blacksmith must not be jealous, otherwise his hand is spoiled."

6. A mirror must never be brought near the forge; it would take hold of its soul which resides in the axe at the altar (2).

2. Dugalle te gere fã na a kanana; ka fã ni tã: "The mirror must not be brought near the forge; it will take the soul from the forge."

[834] 7. Sexual relations near the forge prevent its functioning (3).

3. Noa te gere fa nda la: "No obscene action may take place near the door of the forge."

Breaking the taboos of the forge is equivalent to attacking the virility of the blacksmith, for the bellows are his testicles. Thus the artisans present themselves naked before the culprit to shame him; he is seated on the communal anvil and water in which large [783] millet (keninge) has been soaking is poured over his head to purify the instrument (4).

4. If the fault is irreparable, the kneeling chief crushes three grains of large millet (keninge) on the anvil, a gesture which symbolizes the death of the culprit whose name he pronounces at the same time.

326 783 /124/ The affected owner then proceeds to reconstruct his forge. Having taken a piece of charcoal, a piece of iron, a piece of leather, and his tools, he goes to the kotigi to ask him to perform the necessary purifications. In the presence of the parents gathered around the forge and in front of the culprit, the kotigi officiating alone, crushes the iron, leather, and charcoal, and then goes to fetch the kongobwona axe kept in the sanctuary of ancestral tools. He places all this before the altar facing the east, and recites the following prayer over a gourd filled with water, which he holds in his hands:

"You forge, ancient thing, you belong to us, to us Gwonna; so and so has broken his taboo, I am his senãnku and am apologizing to you for this deed. I have said: forge; I have said: blacksmith of Gwondougou" (1).

1. E fã, fẽ Roro, e ye an gwonna ta ye;
kari macina ye tnẽ tyẽ, ne ye senãnku ye,
nye delili kẹ a ko la; ngo fã; ngo
gwondugu numu.

The axe is then washed in water to which has been added some earth taken out of the hut. Next, the officiator completely demolishes the tainted forge and rebuilds it with the mud thus obtained while one of the Gwonna witnesses keeps a little of this earth in a piece of cloth as a testimony to the reconstruction.

The blacksmith slits the throats of two roosters over the new forge while the ingredients groundup by the kotigi are placed on the altar. The following day, accompanied by his parents, he goes to ask the chief of the Komo to proceed with the purification. The members of the society meet at his home and the masker whistles into the forge to chase away ultimately the miasmas provoked by the breaking of the taboo. The fowls brought by the participants are sacrificed on the forge and all join in drinking beer offered by the interested party. The following day, the chief of the Komo calls for the latter's wives. Each in her turn, they place their heads on the anvil, an act which chases away the nyama which they have been concealing since the offense was committed, and then leave on it, cowrie shells and kola nuts as an offering.

794 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered
776 to the dasiri and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial
782 victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the sacrificer.

B. The dangu

776 The crossroads dangu or danku (literally, boundary of the head) are
778 inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene
823 in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them,
783 and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his
● presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands." On the occasion of any event concerning the individual, the family, or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you; you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la ni jigi be fe, ngo e dangu.

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the nyama which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p. 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own tere by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

776 778 823 783 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification. As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed" its tere from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad force acting on his tere has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an

1. See pp. 90 ff.

animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the tere and nyama, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the dangu when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity [833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers [684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on the dangu after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the cross-roads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the dangu, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 778 823 241 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whomever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits. The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three times the name of the dangu above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the nyama of the dangu. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the dangu and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in particular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually used.

But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one resorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden mallet, gosilande is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars

In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares, the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

"the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

794 3. Šu kasa be.
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688 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
766 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas. The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
796 the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
688 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little
782 of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who, in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/ in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

1. Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini,
ne ma na m fa šia tuku ko la.

194 183 The victim offered by the responsible party then has its throat cut, its body is thrown into the water, and the members take some black earth to smear again on the regenerated nya.

If the chief does not observe the chastity imposed upon him before every sacrifice, he must advise the elders of his age grade and purify the altars by sacrificing two roosters or a goat.

It would seem that the taboo of the nimara boli may not be broken without danger, and that in this case the fault is almost irreparable. The Komo is affected not only in one of its parts, but in its entirety, and a general reordering becomes necessary for the society. The chief and the elders carry away the principal altars to their place of origin, that is to say to the village where they were consecrated through contact with those of the local Komo (1). The owner of this latter Komo

1. See p. 190.

keeps the tainted objects for seven days. After this delay, the petitioners return, bringing victims which are sacrificed upon the altars now placed in contact with those from which they originated (2). The

2. The nimara boli is "rubbed" on the nimara boli of the tro ba, the nyõ boli on the nyõ boli of the same, etc.

meat is eaten by the chief who is being consulted, and by him alone. The petitioners must then return home with their sack without speaking a word to anyone during the trip.

This ceremony, which is a second consecration, may under no circumstances be repeated. If the taboo is broken once more after a first fault and a first reordering, the Komo is considered to be entirely destroyed and the village is sometimes abandoned by the inhabitants who have "lost their soul" and who fear the wrath of Faro; they disperse, unhappy and powerless. Some conversions to Islam or to Christianity may have had no other motivation.

H. Role of the Komo

194 182 "The Komo is a society which unites the highest divine power, men, animals, and plants until the /165/ end of the world. It is the

769 At an annual ceremony presided over by the Komo, the members assemble in honor of thedead. It is called su sɔ sibiri, "Saturday of the sacrifice to the dead" and is celebrated on a Saturday at the time when the ears are being formed in the millet fields.

The kotigi removes the ancestral tools from their shelter and carries them to the graves. Then the chief of the Komo and his assistants, accompanied by the maskers, carry the altars to the cemetery while singing. Each grave is put for a moment into contact with the nimara boli and the nyama boli; the exuviae of the souls of the dead each visit the bodies they once animated. To the rhythm su bara, "rhythm of the dead," played on the drums, the maskers dance and sing around the graves while mock labor is carried out with each of the ancestral tools. During the whole ceremony the kinsmen wail, the men near the graves and the women in the house. A victim is sacrificed, cut up, and cooked in new pots which are broken after they have been used in order to avoid the contagion of the nyama of the dead. The dances of the maskers are performed during the two days that follow. In some villages the ceremony is repeated after the harvest has been threshed.

Exceptional Cases

The Stillborn

845 783 It is said of a stillborn child that he has lost both his soul and his double, that is to say, his complete being. The parents who are responsible to Faro for this disaster are obliged to find and recapture the spiritual elements of their child, the woman the soul, and the man the double, in the course of long and sometimes painful rituals.

As soon as the woman is able to go out after the birth, both parents are led, shaved and naked, before the members of the family assembled in the courtyard. As testimony /197/ of the deceased to Faro, their hair, mixed with that of the child, is buried in the wall of their home. Then a tomato, representing the foetus, is introduced into [824] a large incision made in the woman's thigh. The man crouches and drinks the juice which drips from the fruit and which symbolizes the double. Each one bows before the elders of the family, holding their hands behind their backs, to apologize for the fault committed, saying: "Here is my humiliated (sex) behind me" (1).

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1. A ngari ko le ye ngo (ngari is a word of the archaic language which expresses submission.)

Each person responds by striking their genital organs with the little finger: "It is well humiliated" (2).

[826]

2. A ngari ko karu. The little finger is the symbol of the whole person; to strike with it is to acquiesce with all one's being.

They are led to the door of their home where the village elders of both sexes are gathered; they repeat their apologies to which the same response is given, accompanied by the same gesture of acquiescence.

[304] The chief of the Komo and three elders of his age grade who have never broken any taboos led them to the river bank where they undergo a new circumcision for the man and a new excision for the woman; the blood which is a gift to Faro must fall into the water. This operation is called "purification of the foreskin" (yiriyiri tige) and the pain suffered has an expiatory value.

The sixth day after the operation the members, gathered on the village square (3), dance and sing to the rhythm of the Komo, which

3. This ceremony, called daworo is comparable to that celebrated on the sixth day after circumcision.

is furiously beaten out, in the following words:

"Circumcised children, it is not good to break the tahoo of the anus. I am telling you, Soma and members of the society, do not count their faults. Faro "(ter) (4).

4. (I ye ye) boloko dew tne tyé mañi boda la; nye fo aw ye somaw moko ka na jigi u la; faro (ter). That is to say, "forgive them." The word anus here replaces the word genitals which, according to propriety, is not spoken.

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The parents are led to the square and turn, open-mouthed, around the circle of dancers, seeking to recapture the soul and the double of their child who is present during the ceremony, attracted by the rhythm and visible to them alone. They turn and dance until they fall into a sort of trance called "fainting of the Komo" during which the soul and the double enter them. If the entrance occurs through the mouth, they cease their cries; if it is through the nose, they appear to smother; if by the eyes, their tears run.

/198/ The rhythm then becomes progressively fainter. Soon it is only a murmur. In order not to interrupt the action, in order that the double and the soul may penetrate gently the stretched out bodies, the murmur decreases further to die out gradually. The drummers' sticks alone beat the air in silence, performing the rhythm called "the drum of the soul" (ni dunu foli). With mouths shut so as not to frighten the invisible, the participants softly drone out a song, ni bonye, which calms the soul and incites it to penetrate the two suffering parents. The latter, accompanied by the musicians, are led back home. They are beaten with sticks so that the spiritual principles may not leave them while that which has just been accomplished is proclaimed in a loud voice as well as the shame and suffering voluntarily submitted to. They are then fanned for the "repose of the child's soul."

The following day, the chief of the Komo and his age grade go to the cemetery to remove the bones of the stillborn child. They place them on the ground, examine them in the open, and dance around them to the rhythm of "the drum of the bones" (kolo dunu) while singing:

"White bones, you, dead ones! I have come to see you" (1). Then

1. Kolo dyew aw ʔsu ne nja na bo ye.

the grave is once more closed over them.

The man and the woman are then called to the field of the dead (ʔsu foro) to swear an oath. While their mouths are full of rain water or water from the Niger, a participant in the ceremony leans over and, "to heat the liquid with the strength of words," recites the following prayer under their chins:

"Kill me if I do it twice: good or bad, chance comes from several places. / Faro" (ter) (2).

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2. Ni nya ke ɣyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka kago, gariseke bo fã ka cã; faro (ter).

The water swallowed after these words constitutes a solemn promise to Faro not to repeat the fault.

Next, they are carried home, the man by two members of the society and the woman by three of her companions, so that their toes, [826] the temporary lodging places of the spiritual principles which have returned to them, may not touch the impure earth. They remain three and four days, respectively, on their mats without making a movement. On the seventeenth day, with a thousand precautions, they may resume a more normal life, but they will be entirely free only when a birth occurring in the family will eliminate from their bodies the soul and the double of the dead child by transferring these to the newborn.

/199/ Death of an Uncircumcised Boy

763 When an uncircumcised boy is seriously ill the chief of the ndomo (1) has a rooster sacrificed in order to find out if recovery is possible.

1. See p. 222.

In the case of a negative response the children, taking turns night and day, go into the bush and sound off the ritual objects under the leadership of an initiate. In this way the soul of the dying boy is certain to be captured at the moment of death and channeled by the sound wave and led into the ritual objects themselves. Two initiates are posted near the home of the sick and, as soon as they learn of his death, they go to warn the children in the bush to make them stop playing. The chief sits down facing the west and recites a prayer; then he sacrifices the victims offered by the family.

766 Before the corpse is buried, it is circumcised, and the wanzo goes [304] to settle in the mask of the ndomo. During the night following the burial the members go to the fresh grave and sound the ritual instruments which contain the soul. Each year they repeat this action above the children's graves following the threshing of the harvest to "awaken the dead and to tell them that their souls are not lost."

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IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions; the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from

1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul." But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his ceso the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength.

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro " a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior." He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

all is returned to him. He then goes to the river or to the edge of Faro's pond, where he drinks a little water as a purification for the year to come.

2. On the day chosen for the family ceremony, the ngoni is solemnly removed from the room where it is usually kept hidden from view, and is presented to the family assembled before the door.

The rhythm called kalafoli is beaten out on the frame; the effect of this is to return the soul (ni) of the participants to the river or well. Then another rhythm, representing Faro, is played on the net to call in the renewed soul which has been returned by the spirit. Everyone opens his mouth and inhales the new, beneficial emanations coming over the family. When the rhythm ceases they all shut their mouths and return home without speaking. At the entrance door the children are given little strokes on the back with a little rope, sebe dyuru /208/ "to receive and withstand all that the new year will bring."

The instrument is then replaced in the home while all the participants shut their eyes in order not to see it. The owner goes into a trance, a fact which shows that Faro himself carried the instrument to the place where it will remain during the year. The man walks out backwards from the room where he has placed it and is carried into his česo, where he receives special care intended to return him to his normal state, which includes a purification performed on his individual altar, čuafebyeni (1).

1. See p. 175.

3. The collective ceremonies for the renewal of the person are first performed on the stone fara ba of the village.

The "signs of creation" (bolo ti doniya), engraved with a red-hot iron on a gourd as a request to the ancestors for their support, are presented to the participants. Next, the stone is removed and the objects covered by it are checked, the group thus assuring itself that none has been displaced during the year. Then they proceed to the reconstruction of the ritual drawings. The operator first draws the torches representing the fire used in olden times by the ancestors to defend themselves against attacks and dangers from the outside while they were building the village. The following prayer is recited:

"You, torch of fire, I have prepared you in the mountain (from which our ancestors came), you who keep the souls of the village, protect us from those who wish us harm, fire" (ter) (2).

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2. E mõ nõ tasuma, ñe e ɲu kulu la kɛ dla, dugu nimara ba ke, i kã kla kelenyõ na, tasuma (ter).

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their nyama toward him."

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When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the nyama of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

3. The little finger acts upon the nyama of the body, and the tongue upon the nyama of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old nyama leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received nyama in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

796 the year. The men in turn each place their right foot on the stone
783 and turn in succession toward the cardinal points, inhaling deeply with open mouth and extended tongue as though "to breathe them in."

The women do the same, but place their middle finger on the stone;
[785] at the same time they receive four whip lashes on the back so as to "sustain (1) the change of the cardinal points with pain."

1. The more familiar term, "to receive" would be a better translation.

With heads lowered and hands at their back, the sick persons would present to the stone those parts of their bodies which are the source of their sufferings, saying: "Here is the evil that is in my flesh" (2), for

2. Nka soko la ba na fle ninye.

the stone is both responsible for and a depository of illness. The one-eyed and blind show their closed eyes. The cripples place their affected limb upon it. Then the initiated elders, completely naked, encircle the stone while recting a formula in the ancient language (3).

3. Dede kumbeyde mala kay kapo kumbey de malado. This text would mean: "stone, mistress of all, fear nothing, your children are there."

Next, the young men run around it rapidly rotating their right arms with closed fists. By this gesture, they are asking the stone to help them find a wife. The young girls follow them, walking in their footsteps, a gesture of docility which also expresses their desire to marry.

The ceremony ends with beer drinking which lasts three days. Each person is happy and gay at having "renewed" his soul; the young people will marry and children will be conceived.

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789 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
[788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
787 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
789 rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
783 which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels, he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

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783 The individual is therefore required to [155] undergo proper treatment to return him to his normal, harmless state.

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182 From this point of view, social life seems to give rise to a series of rites involving the disintegration and reintegration or the aggregation of the individual in relation to the group in which he lives. Birth, circumcision, marriage, illness, death and the performance of certain trades are all modes of existence, whose beginning and end usually involve three stages: separation from the common milieu, accomplishment of the act, and reintegration into the former milieu or aggregation in a new milieu. Between the first and the second state as well as between the third and the fourth there exists usually a kind of negative interval which we call marginal. This system, which comes to light upon an analysis of multiple facts, is actually subject to modifications or alterations which can change its physiognomy. Nevertheless, the basis of these ritual sequences is so well established that by comparing external manifestations with the theoretical system it is possible to understand them better and to restore to some of them, which have become badly mutilated, their real meaning, which the native is usually, if not always, unable to explain or to define precisely.

A detailed study of institutions will give an opportunity for concrete analysis of these ritual sequences, which a kind of age-old empiricism has transformed into laws of a sort. They have come to represent that part of custom which has acquired a kind of permanence by virtue of public acceptance.

It is apparent everywhere among the Blacks that events of a general character (birth, coming-of-age, marriage, illness and death) are surrounded by ritual practices that vary outwardly from place to place but may all fit our theoretical system of three stages with marginal periods. All denote a common basis of magic and all derive from a long-tried empiricism which has given them a peculiar and relatively stable physiognomy in terms of the milieu with which the rites are connected.

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182 What we have just said about individuals must also apply to collective groups: the latter deal with each other or

764 period is sometimes reduced to three days, but a week conforms more to custom, as is shown by the Ségou chronicle cited earlier.

All this takes place "at the door of the dead," at the blon'-da, as the natives call it, that is, at the very place where the elder was wont to sit and where offerings were made to the ancestors. It is believed that the soul of the departed is there and will be gratified amidst this abundance honoring him and testifying to his kindness and also to his power. In the minds of the Bambara these repasts of communion form a very strong bond among those who partake of them. The act of eating consecrated food together is a kind of sacrament which binds the participants to mutual aid. A traitor is doomed to be cursed by the manes.

Magic, of course, can free a person from these bonds and even enable him to profit from these funeral gatherings to further the most nefarious schemes, but that does not alter the concepts on which the dyansa and the sanga-fo are based.

765 (d) Mourning. The purification of the hut of the de-
● 783 ceased takes place on the eighth day. Women pulverize tree
[824] bark -- from the cailcedra (2) especially -- put it in water,

2. Khaya senegalensis.

and sprinkle this liquid about the hut which they then sweep.

They assemble with native brooms, sing, and do a kind of dance step; they collect the dirt and throw it away at a crossroads outside the village (3). The hut may then be re-

3. Preferably at the main crossroads (da-n-kun'-ba-la).

occupied. [172]

765 During the eight days following the burial, the daughters
514 of the fa live together in strict seclusion. They spend their days in the blon', where they spin cotton and take their meals. To take care of their natural needs, they go out only in a body;

765 twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their [514] heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the nights together, in a single hut if possible.

The wives of the deceased go out only when it is absolutely necessary during the first moon after the death; they [292] are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of purification rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village. [783]

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

801 In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests
805 on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some

1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[576] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 [763] Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

881 At the end of this time, the nyana-n-son-na-ba and his council having come to an agreement with the sema to end the period of seclusion, each leader performs certain magic passes, under the boys' tree and near the girls' huts, to dispel any evil. The Bambara are convinced that so long as the period of convalescence is not officially closed the circumcised boys or excised girls are as much a danger to society as society is to them; that is why they must spend this period in seclusion. Furthermore, anything used by them during their seclusion is impregnated with this evil and may spread it.

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Therefore, as soon as the interdict is lifted, everything is collected to be burned at sunset (2). Near the trees outside

[789]

2. However, personal effects (the boys' kursi, dloki, and baufla, and the girls' tafe) are not burned; along with their stains, these are impregnated with virtues which make them particularly valuable for talismans, amulets, and other magic weapons.

the village the mats, the n-koso-m-bara, the gourds, millet stalks, rags, etc., are all piled up, and the nyana-n-son-na-ba sets them afire. The boys and girls jump over the fire three times; they are then free to return to the village. They run home promptly to adorn themselves for the festival celebrating their return.

881 Once more there are lavish meals and interminable drinking bouts, followed by a general gathering in the public square. People come from all directions, among them appallingly decrepit old women who try to manage everything. [247]

[291] On this occasion, the boys, soli-ma-tye, appear for the first time in true man's attire, full trousers, cap with earlaps, and an ample new shirt. With lance in hand, they swagger about and simulate the behavior of warriors; they are now tye-kura, "new men."

881 The girls also are decked out to excess in women's attire.
301 Wearing several skirts and adorned with all the jewelry relatives

794 Besides, this submission, if one may call it that, is merely a corollary of the solidarity existing between nyana-den'. This solidarity is shown to the profane whenever litigation arises outside the sphere of the brotherhood; nyana-den' do not [694] hesitate to bear false witness for the sole purpose of helping a guilty co-member evade the sanctions of profane jurisdiction.

For failure to fulfill his obligations or for any other wrong considered reprehensible by the brotherhood, the nyana-den' comes under the jurisdiction of this brotherhood.

Fearing the supernatural retribution which his misdeeds [789] [265] may provoke and seeing portents of it in apparently inexplicable things that cause him pain and surprise, the nyana-den' himself seeks pardon through some kind of expiation, determined by his own intuition alone or by one of the clergy.

On other occasions, the guilty person fails to denounce himself, not merely by deliberate design but sometimes because [787] he is not aware of his wrongdoing and its consequences. In that case it is the wara-da (oracle) who reveals it in a trance.

794 695 The clergy is led, by means of self-accusation, denunciation by witnesses, or accusations based on the most varied imputations, to learn, to investigate, to adjudicate, and to punish the acts of the faithful in material as well as spiritual matters. In the process of carrying out its duties in this respect, the clergy uses every imaginable means of obtaining information and of examination, but the proof of guilt that they particularly want is confession.

The various procedures used to persuade the accused to confess his wrongs may be put under three headings: oath, torture, and divination.

When an oath is taken, the boli is provided with an accessory known as the siri-kun' (knot), to which seven straws are attached. The person taking the oath (kali boli la, "to swear on the boli") then pronounces the usual formula: "May the nyana take my heart and my liver if I lie." When two people exchange this oath in order to vouch for their respective statements, they are said to have "tied the boli" (boli syen'), and it is believed that anyone who perjures himself will be put to death

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

•[783]

1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691]

2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a 777 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

415 783 177

1. A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make!' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

"'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed

2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is

3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

what I heard from my father."

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

621 581 583 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré in becoming Bambara.

621 784 The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object. The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sisé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

621 608 The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage. This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad infinitum. [582] It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

621 608 648 The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing different names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Béreté-Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which [783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

88| healing of their children and their return home. The next morning around the wells one sees only women and young girls with naked torsos washing up in millet in plenty of water; it is to be fermented for the coming drinking bout.

88| And on that day, a little before the sun sets and when it is only
•783 a bloody disk, the circumcised and excised young people bring their mats, the gourd disks strung on sticks, the pierced gourds the size of a fist and filled with small pebbles, the millet stalks carried for so long as sticks, and the dirty handkerchiefs that wrapped their heads under the sacred trees, and the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the one who sacrifices to the genii protectors of the village, sets them afire. A black, thick, acrid and loathsome smoke fouls the air, and an uncertain flame of greenish red tries in vain to rise, so choked is it by old dirt and sweat. Boys and girls dart forward and jump three times over this fire of joy. At once they are purified of all their pollution; they have left behind and abandoned the old selves, smoked them out. Agile as deer or
88| gazelles they run to their huts to masiri don ("to make themselves beautiful"). Everywhere there is an indescribable bustle! Lids of gourds, which are the Negroes' cupboards, roll on the ground, split, break, and fall to pieces, and in the midst of laughter of delirious joy there are the lamentations of an old woman who screams and grumbles. This haste and fever is the cause of delays, and the girls especially cannot yet done with arraying themselves. A piece of amber hangs too low or not low enough, the necklaces are too loose and have to be shortened, worn threads break, and beads by handfuls are lost in the dust.

At last, to the great relief of all, the cry of joy "Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê!" rings out from the four corners of the village. Preceded
[533] by the /195/ chorus of singers (a group of women and girls who clap their hands and sing a most barbaric tune in falsetto, without ever being in harmony), the drums slowly head toward the great trees of the square that is the ballroom. In all the alleys that intersect the village and make it a labyrinth, a crowd of women, men, and children rush, jostle elbows, and shout, and in a moment the square is full.